

Fact Sheet:

Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program

Why Early Intervention Matters	Early Intervention Works! What is Early Intervention? Early intervention provides services for infants and toddlers, birth to three, who have a disability and/or delay and their families. Eligible infants and toddlers and their families in Washington State are entitled to individualized, quality early intervention services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C.
When It Works Best	Why Does “Early” Matter? Research on early development shows that “windows for learning begins at birth.” The clear link between early brain activity and brain development provides the building blocks for life-long learning and function – including entering school ready to learn. With intervention at birth, or soon after the diagnosis of a disability or developmental concern, a child has greater developmental gains and less chance of developing problems.
The ABC’s of Early Intervention “To us, early intervention services were lifelines for our child with special needs. These vital services allowed our little girl to learn to eat, communicate and walk. Now she plays with all the other children at her preschool. Early intervention services were the good start she needed as she began her journey in life. Early intervention allowed our family to have real hope for our little one.” King County Parent	A – Early intervention enhances a child’s development. After nearly 50 years of research, early intervention has demonstrated results in children needing fewer special education and other services later in life, and, in some cases, being indistinguishable from non-disabled classmates. B – Families benefit too! Early intervention helps reduce the additional stresses and frustrations families of infants and toddlers with disabilities experience, enhancing both the child and the family. Supported families need less out of home placement. Statistics demonstrate less abuse and neglect occurs for children receiving early intervention services. C – It is cost effective. Data shows long-term cost savings from early intervention programs. The cost is less when intervention is earlier, preventing developmental problems that would have required special services later in life. In Washington, from October 2004 to September 2005, 20.9% of the children exiting early intervention programs were no longer eligible for special education services by their third birthday.

- Wood, M.E. (1981) calculated the cumulative costs to age 18 of special education services to a child beginning intervention at birth, age two, age six and at age six with no eventual movement to regular education and found the total costs were less if begun at birth. Total cost of special services begun at birth was \$37,273 and total cost if begun at age six was between \$46,816 and \$53,340.
- Studies in Tennessee and Colorado showed that for every dollar spent on treatment, \$4.00 to \$7.00 in savings were realized within 36 months from deferral or special class placement and institutionalization of children with a severe behavior disorder. (Snider, Sullivan, and Manning, 1974 and McNulty, Smith, and Soper, 1983).

About ITEIP

What is ITEIP? The Washington State Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) is a federally funded program that coordinates a statewide system to provide early intervention services for children. ITEIP is located within the Division of Developmental Disabilities in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). ITEIP works in collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Department of Health (DOH), Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), to maintain a statewide system.

Working for Early Intervention in Washington State

Federal Enhancement Funds. Through ITEIP, Part C funds are used to enhance early intervention services. Each year this program brings in approximately \$8 million federal dollars to enhance services. These funds depend on the state providing ongoing funding through the participating state agencies, known as maintenance of effort. If the state continues to provide maintenance of effort funding, the federal dollars can be applied for annually. Part C funding is “payor of last resort” and cannot be used to supplant federal, state or local funds. Thus the state/federal partnership is essential.

“Our child made good, fast progress.”
Spokane Parent

Serving over 7,400 children. IDEA, Part C, cumulatively, served 7,436 children from the period October 1, 2004 –through September 30, 2005.

Caseloads in WA continue to grow. 2002-2003 saw a 3.1% increase, 2003-2004 saw a 6.4% increase, and 2004-2005 a 9.3% increase.

Not every child is found. There is an ongoing challenge to identify and serve every eligible infant and toddler so they are ready to enter school and ensure that no child is left behind.

Funding. Medicaid is a major funding source for early intervention services. The proportion of children who were Medicaid-eligible (70%) was significantly greater than that for all children in Washington (47%). This is similar to national statistics. School district and county funding is voluntary. Currently, nearly half of all school districts and two thirds of Washington's county human services agencies contribute to the funding of services for children, birth to three years of age.

Impact on children and families if Washington loses federal Part C funding. If early intervention services were not available in Washington:

- Early intervention service funding would be reduced by approximately \$8 million or more a year available through IDEA, Part C.
- There would not be coordinated early intervention services statewide for the over 7,400 children currently being served by IDEA, Part C.
- Many developmental concerns may not be addressed in the critical birth to three window, increasing overall costs for social and education services.
- Significantly more children may need special education services at age three and beyond.
- Families throughout Washington would no longer have access to community teams to support their needs.
- State early intervention services standardized policies and procedures and family/child procedural safeguards would be eliminated

Visit the ITEIP Internet website at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/iteip/>